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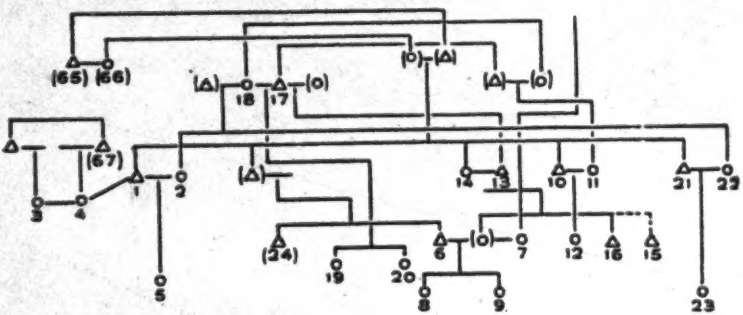

Fig. 11.
Genealogical composition of group a1.

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157 A1. --The chief of the group. He is a man of about 35 years, married to three women: a2, by whom he has a daughter a5, and a3 and a4, both daughters of "sister," without child.

A1 is remarkably intelligent, conscious of his responsibilities, active, enterprising and ingenious. When we went to visit his village, he did not hesitate to follow a new itinerary, unknown to him, because our horses could not pass along the habitual path. And when we arrived at the village, we found the stakes necessary to tie our oxen and horses, which he had had set up by a party sent a few hours ahead of time.

His attitude concerning writing is very revealing. He immediately understood his role of signing (1), and the social superiority which it

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1. The Nambikwara of group a are completely ignorant of drawing, if one excepts a few geometric tracings on gourds. For several days they did not know what to do with the paper and pencils which we distributed to them. A little later, we saw them deeply engrossed in tracing wavy lines. In doing this they were imitating the only use which they had seen us make of our note pads, that is, for writing, but without understanding the purpose and significance.

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Besides, they called the act of writing: iekariukediutu (a1), that is "make lines," which for them had an esthetic interest:

(3) Kihikagnere mũʔiene (b1).
It is nice to make lines.

[177] The drawings reproduced in Figure 19 thus constitute a cultural innovation inspired by our own drawings.

622 confers; also [41] he asked us for a note pad and a pencil, and we
115 are likewise equipped when we travel together. He does not com-
157 municate to me verbally the information that I ask of him, but traces on his paper some wavy lines and presents them to me as though I should read his response. But he himself is half duped by his comedy. Each time that his hand finishes a line, he examines it anxiously, as if the significance should miraculously spring forth, and each time, the same chagrined disillusion is painted on his face. But he doesn't give in. And it is silently understood between us that his scrawl possesses a meaning which I pretend to understand. Naturally, the verbal commentary follows almost immediately, and excuses me from having to demand some very necessary clarifications. When we discuss command, we shall return to certain aspects of this semi-mystification.

He is a valuable informant who understands the problems, perceives the difficulties, and is interested in the work; but his functions absorb him often, and he disappears for whole days on a hunting expedition, a survey of itinerary or a localization of ripe seed or fruit trees. On the other hand, his wives often call him to tender love games in which he lets himself be voluntarily involved.

In a general way, his attitude shows a logic, a continuity of purpose, very exceptional among the Nambikwara who are often unstable and temperamental. Placed in other conditions and with other means at his disposal, he might be a valuable organizer. And he is, after all, alone responsible for the destinies of his group, which he conducts with competence, although in a sometimes utopian spirit.

The father and the mother of A1 are dead. But his father's brother and mother's sister, whom he calls ahyĩnosu and aʔkenosu live in the same village (A65 and a66).

115 a2. --About 30 to 35 years. The eldest of the wives of A1, mother of a5, daughter of a18 and a now dead father. She is serious industrious, a little reserved in social relations. In the triple household

789 Poison is thus nãnde par excellence, although the latter can exist in other forms, at the same time less precise and more complex. We attach extreme importance to the fact that a rigorously utilitarian technique of the manufacture of poisons is found associated with a theory which accounts for their effectiveness through the intermediary of metaphysical concepts. The presence among the Nambikwara of a curare reduced to a basic product, and whose preparation excludes all ritual, associated with the very low cultural level of these Indians, poses in a particularly impressive way the question of finding out if these characteristics which are very primitive are so by origin or constitute the residue of an impoverished culture. Now, it is much more reasonable to interpret the apparent contradiction of theory [121 174] and practice in matters of poison by the loss of complex rituals which farther north are attached to the making of curare, than it would be to explain how a theory of supernatural character could have been built on the bases of treatment which has remained purely experimental, of the root of the strychnos.

Besides the notion of nãnde we should examine another which is the object of a particularly advanced elaboration among the eastern groups, that of the atãsu (a1). Atãsu signifies animal, but the use of the term by the Indians is complex. First of all it is the animal taken in a generic sense, in opposition to the inanimate. They present me with a honey cake and, pointing out the body of a bee which is still in it, I ask what it is. They do not answer, "it is a bee" but: atãsu, "it is the animal." Atãsu also means real animals, but ones without their own names in the vocabulary, and which are of particularly fearful character. Thus oxen are called by this name by the Nambikwara who never saw any [99] before the years 1910-1915, and who entertain a great fear of them. Then we find the same term to designate the stars (eastern groups), and the same name is given to the ticktock of the clock, both conceived of as realities animated by mysterious characteristics. Finally, atãsu is a special animal of supernatural essence, which is seen appearing in two cases—at night, on the road, in certain places and during certain periods, and upon the approach of death. In the first case, one risks being attacked and killed by the atãsu if one does not defend oneself 789 411 in the appropriate manner. This means is found in the throwing stick [épieu] (distinct from the digging stick), thrown in a prescribed manner. The throwing stick, a large piece of wood of flattened form [286 531] and pointed at the end is furnished with a handle usually decorated with black and white bark weaving (javelin: hĩ'dosu [a1], keẽũẽre

2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

tainship is not hereditary; the chief, when old or sick, designates his successor from the ablest men of the group. The chief's authority is slight; it depends wholly on the good will of the family heads.

Relations between neighboring bands are inspired both by fear and by the desire to exchange goods. Warfare, therefore, is closely connected with barter. Groups not acquainted with each other use ritual speech when they meet.

Before starting a war expedition, a divinatory rite is performed with special songs and dances. An arrow is hidden by the shaman, the outcome of the expedition being pressaged by its appearance the following day.

LIFE CYCLE

Childbirth.—After the delivery of a child, the placenta is buried in the bush and both parents are subjected to rigid prohibitions concerning food, the use of ornaments, and social contacts.

Puberty.—The initiation rite for young men consists of piercing their lips and nose and giving them their adult personal name. At her first menstruation, a girl is isolated for several months in a special shelter outside the village, where she is given ritual food by her mother. At the end of the rite, she takes a long bath in the river; this also constitutes the first step of the marriage ceremony.

Both cross-cousin and avuncular marriages (see p. 367), are often planned by parents for their infant children. Marriage is celebrated by festivals, banquets, and dances. The union is pronounced by the chief. Fish and fishing are important both before and during the ceremony.

Separation is frequent, the chief cause being that the man seeks a younger and prettier woman. There is no social sanction of adultery, except that the seducer is advised by his companion to go away for a while so as to avoid the husband's revenge. A murderer also flees vengeance.

Death.—Some groups of *Nambicuara* bury their dead in a circular pit, the corpse being placed in a crouching position. Others leave the corpse to decompose in an elongated ditch and later wash the bones in the river, put them in a basket, and bury them in the village, which is then abandoned. Weapons, implements, adornments, and other property of the deceased are destroyed, but his garden—if he owned one—is abandoned only for a few months. Later anybody may cultivate it.

ESTHETIC AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Art.—Most *Nambicuara* groups are completely ignorant of drawing, although some groups decorate calabashes with dots and straight and sinuous lines. These are conventionalized reproductions of realistic designs found among other groups.

752 They spread saliva on bâanêcedútú sores with the palm of the hand. They squeeze insect bites between two fingers.

757 Those suffering from fever go quietly into a corner, when they do not leap into running water. They eat nothing as long as the seizure lasts.

In the village on the Juina River there was an old Indian of about sixty. He was sad and prostrate and was not cheered by our gifts. He would put his hands to his head to show that it was aching. A lad who seemed [251] to be his son judging by the extreme affection he bestowed on the old man, contrary to the other Indians, kept offering him honey with water. Each time the old man would turn away. In the afternoon, his condition not having improved, he called the boy and said something to him.

The lad grasped the man's head in his hands and put his mouth against the nostrils, sucking hard. It seems that this suction which he repeated later was helpful, for the old man became more expansive.

[Fig. 41]

853 Childbirth must be easy, considering how poorly the foetus is nourished. The Indian women, when they do not have sufficient milk, take a drought of water in their mouth and put their lips onto those of the baby, transferring the liquid in a nourishing kiss.

844 I wanted to know how they cut the umbilical cord and showed several Indians who were more outgoing and intelligent--Damasceno, Nuleke, Krikriceknerá--a drawing in a book that showed a foetus with its attachments. From Damasceno's replies I understood that the mother cuts the cord with her teeth and hides the placenta under some leaves.

This piece of information obviously remains subject to revision.

● 531 Drawings by the Indians of the Serra do Norte, though rudimentary, reveal some interesting motifs emancipated from animal forms.

The circle, triangle and square are drawn in black on the surface of some gourds.

[532] [252] Snakes and saurians are sometimes drawn sketchily(1)

113 1. See E. Roquette-Pinto, "Documentos para o estudo da psicologia dos Indios do

7:Roquette-Pinto--46B E-4, 5 (no date)1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17
(ca. 1912)

● 531

Fig. 46. Ornamental motif of the Serra do Norte Indians.

7:Roquette-Pinto--47A E-4, 5 (no date) 1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17
(ca. 1912)

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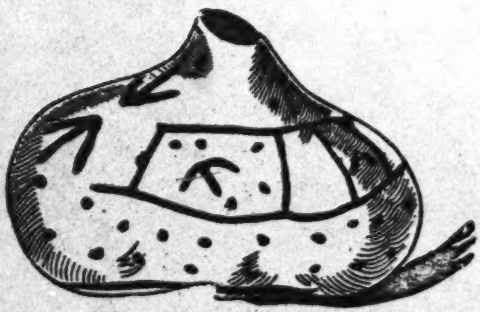

Fig. 47. Painted gourd.

7:Roquette-Pinto--48A E-4, 5 (no date) 1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17
(ca. 1912)

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Fig. 48. Designs of the Serra do Norte Indians.

Fig. 49. Designs of the Serra do Norte Indians.

7:Roquette-Pinto--49A E-4, 5 (no date)1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17
(ca. 1912)

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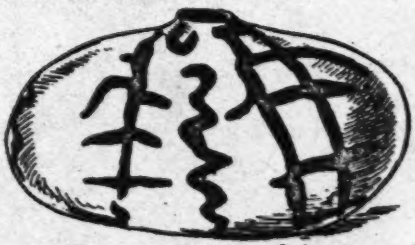

Fig. 30. Designs of the Serra do Norte Indians.

7:Roquette-Pinto--50A E-4,5 (no date) 1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17
(ca. 1912)

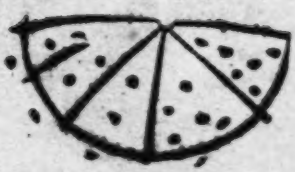

Fig. 51. Ornamental motif of the Serra do Norte Indians.

7:Roquette-Pinto--51A E-4,5 (no date) 1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17
(ca. 1912)

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Fig. 52. Ornamental motif of the Serra do Norte Indians.

7-Roquette-Pinto--52A E-4, 5 (no date) 1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17
(ca. 1912)

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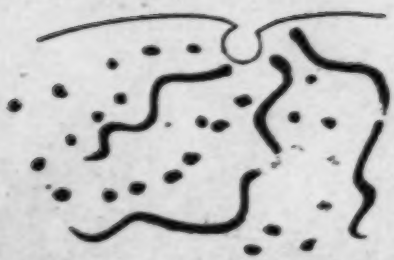
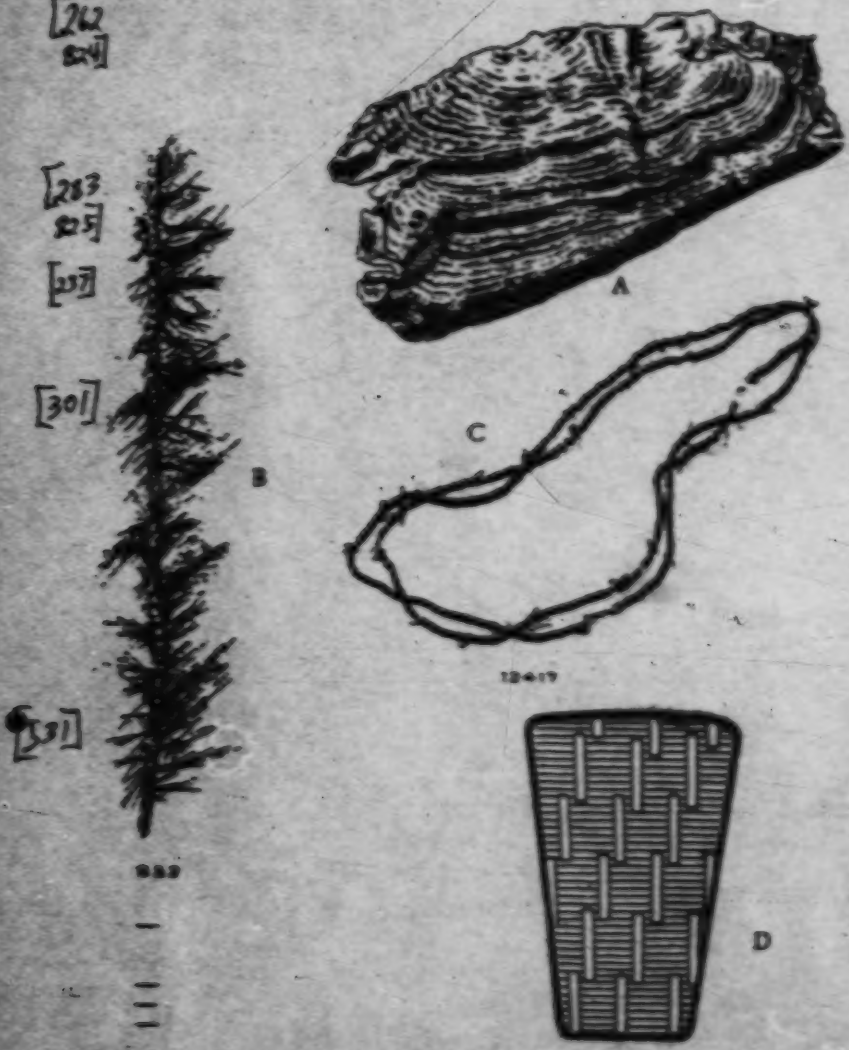


Fig. 53. Ornamental motif of the Serra do Norte Indians.

?Roquette-Pinto--S?A E-4, 5 (no date)1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17
(ca. 1912)



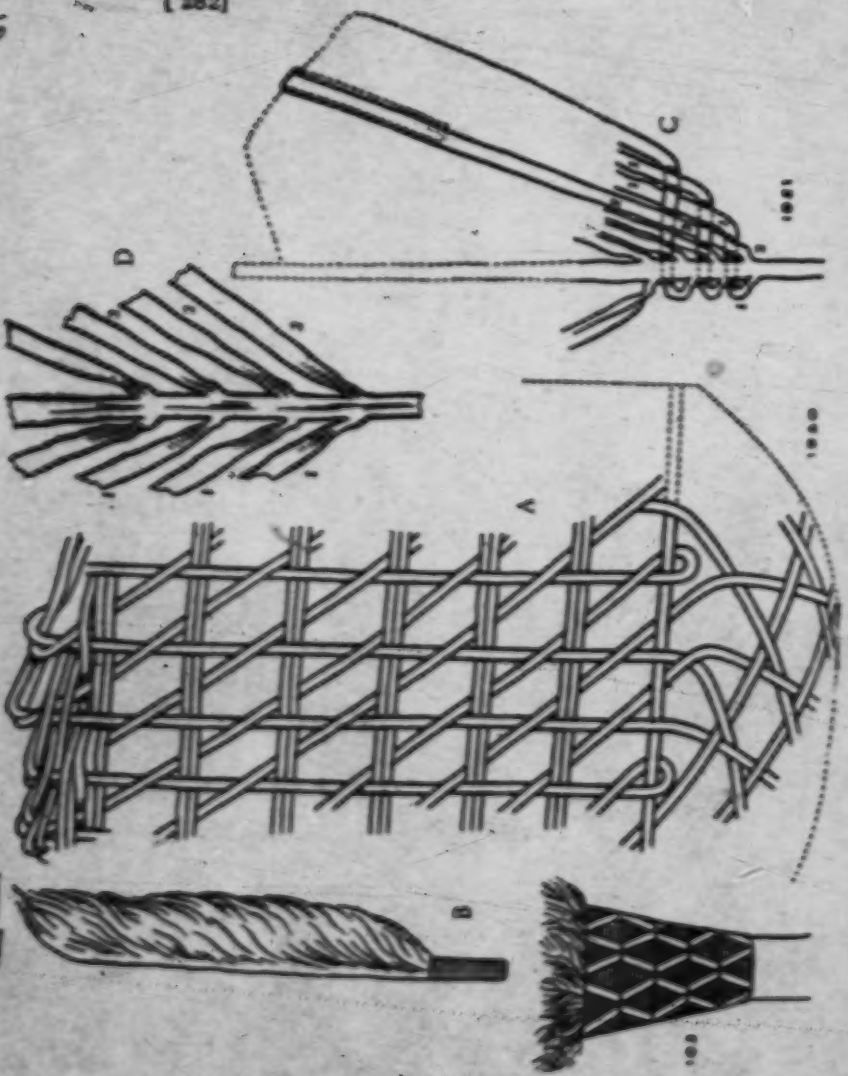
A. Areai mushroom (Políporus sp.) eaten by the Serra do Norte Indians.

B. Cord of monkey hair (Pithecia satanas).

C. Necklace made with minute shreds of feather stems.

D. Ornamental motif of the Serra do Norte Indians.

?:Roquette-Pinto--59C E-4, 5 (no date)1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17
(ca. 1912)



A. Pattern of basketry made with the flexible stem of a Desmoncus.
B. Details of nose plume.
C and D. Weaving pattern of palm leaf fan.